

**Broadband (Fiber Optics) Study Committee Meeting**  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, January 28, 2021

Location: Zoom meeting

Committee Members present: Kim Maxwell, Bill Brown, Libby Borden, Nina Ritson, John DeShazo, Brett Robbins, Jim Jasper

Other attendees: J Michael Sconyers, Matt Riiska, Anonymous caller

Meeting called to order: 6:04 PM

Major topics

- Minutes Approval
  - Minutes approved - Unanimous
- Agenda Approval
  - Agenda approved – Unanimous
    - Ownership of the network
    - Get the business plan done by next week
    - Handle cost of homes far away from the road
- Network Ownership
  - Towns that pursued this model prior to us have retained ownership of the network (e.g., Otis)
  - Options for ownership
    - Give the money to an existing carrier
      - Charter seems interested in this re: pursuing similar model in MA
      - Comcast has existing interest in the town
    - Give money to smaller company (e.g., Go Net Speed, Tilson, Lit Communications)
      - Likely will want to own the wire
    - Get Crocker / Sertex to be the “Carrier” (infrastructure and service)
    - Own it
      - Build it and sell it
        - There is a precedent for this
      - Have control over pricing and use of the wire
      - This will be strongest as a coop in the future; no mechanism to create a telecommunications utility
  - Should we do an RFI with the smaller companies?
    - We need hard numbers from each of these companies to understand the real costs of building the network
  - Build deeper relationship with Lamont/Maria Horn

- The town does not want to own the network
  - A potential, unknown future costs makes it very difficult for the town to take on the future liability
  - Town will likely need a commission to maintain oversight over a network even if the actual maintenance is performed by a 3P company
  - Questions about what it means to own the network and what components could be managed by a collection of other entities
- Budget concerns
  - As the 2021/22 FY Budget stands at this moment, there will be an approximate 6% increase in the mil rate from 25.98 to 27.51 (to be voted on in Spring 2021).
    - Breaking this down: \$213,875 expected increase in the general town budget, and \$61,000 increase in the Botelle School Budget. The estimated increase does not include new capital spending for roads, bridges, fire house, or fiber infrastructure.
    - To pay for all high priority projects, the budget increase could be as high as 10%
  - While the fiber project will likely only need \$200,000 (~3% increase), when considered alongside all other priority projects, Matt Riiska expressed doubts that the town would accept a 6-10% increase in the mil rate
  - The committee is actively pursuing charitable donations to help offset the total town burden.
- Unresolved
  - Do we have the right details for Finance to evaluate our plan?
  - What do we do about ownership? (Town + Alternative)
  - Will the town pay for this?
- Upcoming meetings
  - Thursday, February 18, 2021 @ 6PM

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brett Robbins  
Secretary